NATION

Torrential rains flood J&K, vital bridge damaged

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BUSINESS

Bank of India tags RCom, Anil Ambani as fraud

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SPORTS

Sarr, Hudson-Odoi find the net in closely-fought draw

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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EPS leads NDA; he is CM candidate, says TN BJP Chief

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI, 24 AUG

Tamil Nadu BJP President Nainar Nagenthran on Sunday said AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami will be the Chief Minister if the NDA wins the 2026 Assembly election. Nagenthran, when asked on the contradictions between Union Home Minister Amit Shah and AIADMK top leader Palaniswami's statements over government formation if the alliance wins polls next year, the BJP leader said Palaniswami led the alliance in the state. Asked on the top AIADMK leadership reportedly being upset over Shah's remark that the NDA alliance parties will form the government, he said Shah meant "alliance party's (AIADMK) rule." There should be no confusion he said, "Which is the bigger party in the alliance in Tamil Nadu? I have already told you that it will be Edappadi Palaniswami," he remarked. *—PTI*

Airtel network outage; Bengaluru among worst hit

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Days after a significant outage, Airtel services have faltered once more, impacting users in the City and other major cities including Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Surat, and Ahmedabad. According to DownDetector, a site monitoring tech disruptions, peak complaints surged at around 12.15pm, with 7,109 reports logged. Airtel Cares attributed the issue to a "temporary connectivity disruption". Their statement read, "The issue you're facing appears to be due to a temporary connectivity disruption and is expected to be resolved within 1 hour. Once that time has passed, please restart your mobile phone to restore services." While reports showed signs of recovery post-1pm, there were over 150 complaints remaining at 4pm. *—Agencies*

Documents of 98% Bihar voters received, says EC

BJP says Aadhaar can't be used for SIR

The documents were received in the 60 days between 24 June and 24 August, the Election Commission said *(REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE)*

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The Election Commission said documents of 98.2 per cent electors have already been received with eight more days left for people to file claims and objections to the draft electoral roll of Bihar published as part of the intensive revision of voters' list.

From 24 June to 24 August, in 60 days, 98.2 per cent of the people submitted their documents.

It underlined that the claims and objections period gives an opportunity to the electors to not only rectify mistakes in the draft rolls, but also submit their requisite documents which they may not have provided while submitting their enumeration forms.

"As per information received from the office of CEO Bihar, till date documents of 98.2 per cent electors have been received," it said.

"This is an average of about 1.64 per cent per day. There are still eight days to go till 1 September with just 1.8 per cent electors remaining for submission of the documents," the EC added.

The Supreme Court had earlier asked the poll authority to accept Aadhaar or any of the 11 listed documents from people seeking inclusion in the voters list.

However, the BJP's IT Department head Amit Malviya said that nowhere in the judgment did the Supreme Court even suggest that it should be used as a valid document for the SIR.

Malviya said that Aadhaar is a proof of identity, not citizenship and could not be used to secure voting rights. The Opposition is spreading propaganda over the issue, he said.

"In fact, this very bench, on 12 August, held that Aadhaar is not a legal document to prove citizenship," Malviya said.

Attributing to the Supreme Court what it has not said is contempt of court, he said in a swipe at the opposition parties.

"The truth is simple: SIR is intact, Aadhaar alone cannot get you enrolled, dead, fake, Bangladeshi and Rohingya names will be removed and only Indian citizens will elect the next government – not foreigners," he said.

Malviya claimed that 65 lakh names removed from the draft voter roll in Bihar included fake, dead, and Bangladeshi and Rohingya names. *—PTI*

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Evicted people will be deleted from Assam voters' list: Himanta

Margherita, 24 Aug

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said the names of people evicted from encroached land will be deleted from the voters' list of the place where they were living illegally. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Margherita in Tinsukia, Sarma claimed the previous generation of the state failed to "save" lower and central Assam, but efforts must be made to "save" upper and northern parts, in an apparent reference to the sizeable population of Bengali-speaking Muslims in those areas.

"If someone is evicted from a place, their name cannot be on the voter list of that place. Along with eviction, names will be deleted from the voter list," he said.

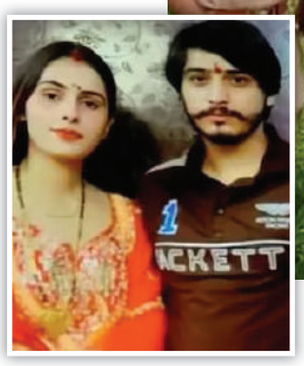
The CM had earlier claimed that the state was witnessing "invasion" from people of "one religion", who are allegedly encroaching on land to alter its demography.

"Their modus operandi is to enter upper and northern Assam now," he said Sunday. *—PTI*

Noida woman burnt alive over Rs 36L dowry in front of son

NOIDA, 24 AUG

A woman, identified as Nikki in her mid-30s, was allegedly killed by her husband and in-laws in Greater Noida over a dowry demand of Rs 36 lakh. The incident occurred on Thursday night in Sirsa village, witnessed by Nikki's six-year-old son and her elder sister, Kanchan. "Meri mumma ke upar kuch dala, fir unko chanta mara fir lighter se aag laga di," the child said, describing how they poured liquid on his mother and set her ablaze.



Nikki's husband, Vipin, was shot in the leg by cops while escaping custody *PHOTO: PTI | X*

Kanchan claims that the family had subjected her sister to prolonged torture due to dowry demands. "They hit her in her neck and head and threw acid on her. Our kids were also in the same house," she lamented.

The police were alerted by Fortis Hospital after Nikki was admitted with severe burn injuries, but she succumbed before help arrived. Greater Noida Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Sudhir Kumar confirmed that Nikki's husband, Vipin, and his mother were arrested. A case has been registered based on Kanchan's complaint. Nikki and Vipin were married in 2016 and have one son together. *—PTI*

India tests 1st integrated air defence system

DRDO conducts its maiden flight tests of Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS), off the coast of Odisha, on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

India has "successfully" conducted the maiden flight tests of an integrated air defence weapon system (IADWS) off the coast of Odisha, demonstrating its growing military capabilities in the face of an evolving regional security scenario.

The IADWS is a multi-layered air defence system consisting of indigenous quick reaction surface-to-air missiles (QRSAM), very short range air defence system (VSHORADS) missiles and a high power laser based directed-energy weapons (DEW) system, according to the defence ministry.

The indigenous air defence system was flight-tested at 12.30pm off the coast of Odisha on Saturday.

Under the IADWS, an integrated operation of all the weapon systems will be controlled by a centralised command and control centre, developed by DRDO.

The VSHORADS and DEW are developed by Research Centre Imarat and Centre for High Energy Systems and Sciences respectively.

"During the flight-tests, three different targets, including two high-speed fixed wing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle targets and a multi-copter drone were simultaneously engaged and destroyed completely by the QRSAM, VSHORADS and high energy laser weapon system at different ranges and altitudes," the ministry said in a statement.

It said all the system components performed "flawlessly".

"This unique flight test has established the multi-layered air-defence capability of our country and is going to strengthen area defence for important facilities against enemy aerial threats," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on social media. *—PTI*

Woman dies in City flyover accident

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

A woman was killed when the bike she was riding pillion with her husband was involved in a collision with a car on a flyover near Devanahalli on Sunday morning.

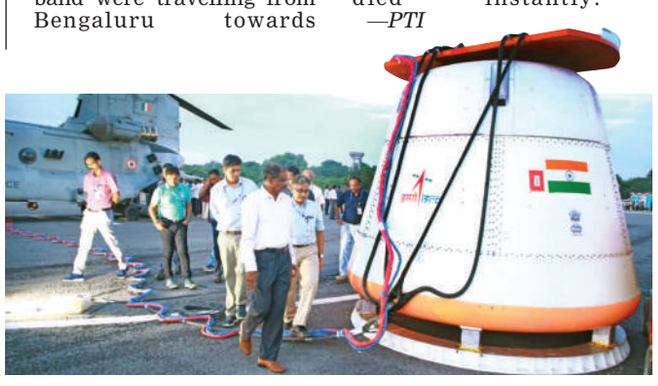
Netravati, 31, and her husband were travelling from Bengaluru towards Chikkaballapur when a car coming in the wrong direction rammed their bike on Bachchalli Gate flyover. The woman was flung from the flyover by the force of the impact and fell on the road below, suffering a severe head injury and died instantly. *—PTI*

Man chops up pregnant wife in Hyd

HYDERABAD, 24 AUG

A five-month pregnant woman was allegedly murdered by her husband in Medipally, who then dismembered her body and disposed of the parts in the Musi river. The incident occurred around 4.30pm on Saturday when the 27-year-old accused throttled his 21-year-old wife amidst ongoing disputes.

To conceal his crime, he used a hexa blade to chop her body into pieces, discarding the head, hands, and legs into the river, while retaining the trunk at their home. He then packed the body parts separately and discarded them over three trips. *—PTI*



ISRO accomplished its first Integrated Air Drop Test for a parachute based deceleration system for Gaganyaan missions *PHOTO: PTI*

ISRO COMPLETES FIRST AIR-DROP TEST FOR GAGANYAAN PARACHUTE

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

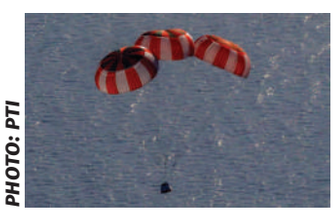


PHOTO: PTI

ISRO on Sunday successfully carried out the first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-01) to validate the parachute-based deceleration system for the upcoming Gaganyaan mission. The end-to-end demonstration was conducted near Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

The exercise was jointly executed by ISRO, the Indian Air Force, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard.

The Gaganyaan project is aims to be the country's first human spaceflight programme.

The parachute-based deceleration mechanism is a key component to ensure the safe recovery of the crew module during re-entry and landing. *—PTI*

THE MODERN WALL

Pujara bids adieu to all forms of Indian cricket

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Cheteshwar Pujara, the rock of Indian batting in the longest format for over a decade, on Sunday announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, bringing the curtains down on an exemplary Test career.

The 37-year-old made the announcement on social media, having played the last of his 103 Tests in 2023.

"As a little boy from the small town of Rajkot, along with my parents, I set out to aim for the stars; and dreamt to be a part of the Indian cricket team. Little did I know then that this game would give me so much," Pujara said. "But as they say, all good things must come to an end, and with immense gratitude I have decided to retire from all forms of Indian cricket."

With another domestic season around the corner, Pujara was expected to turn up for Saurashtra but the champion batter thought it was the right time move on.

During his time away from the Indian team, Pujara turned to commentary and was part of the broadcast team for the recent India-England series in the UK. As recently as last month, he seemed committed to play another year of domestic cricket and was keeping up with his fitness routine even while commentating.

Pujara collected 19 hundreds and 35 half centuries in his careering ranging from 2010 to 2023. Following the retirement of Rahul Dravid, he became the wall of the Indian Test team especially in overseas conditions.

His conventional methods may not be the most attractive but were very effective. He was brilliant at tiring out the bowlers, something best displayed on the back-to-back tours of Australia in 2018 and 2021 when he played a pivotal role in the team's successive series wins Down Under. *—PTI*

>>>>More on Page 8

PUJARA, INDIA'S RELIABLE HERO

Total Test runs:	Average:	Centuries:	50s:
7,195	43.6	19	35

8TH HIGHEST RUN TEST SCORER FOR INDIA

MEMORABLE INNINGS:

145* in Colombo vs Sri Lanka, 2015: Put in the unusual position of opening the innings, Pujara carried his bat with a mammoth unbeaten ton. With the visitors stranded at 180/7, Pujara's composure helped guide the team to a respectable 312, helping India win its first series in Sri Lanka after 22 years.

123 and 71 in Adelaide vs Aus, 2018: Rescuing India from a precarious 41/4 in the first Test, Pujara's knocks helped India win the match. He scored two more tons and was awarded player of the series as India secured their first series win in Down Under.

50 and 77 in Sydney and 25 and 56 in Brisbane v Aus, 2021: India won its second series in Australia with an injured squad and several key players missing. However, Pujara anchored the middle-order with a solid defence, scoring a half-century in over 200 balls in Brisbane.

PHOTO: PTI

Priyank flays RSS, calls for pledge against its toxicity

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Minister Priyank Kharge has vehemently condemned the RSS, stating that every citizen must commit to ensuring "the toxicity of the RSS should not reach us" for India to evolve into an enlightened and prosperous nation. Taking to social media, Kharge described the RSS as a "poisonous organisation," accusing it of promoting "Nazi-inspired hatred, caste-based cruelty, and Manusmriti-driven ideology." He emphasised that "RSS ideology is an enemy of the Constitution, of national unity, of the Tricolour, of the national anthem, and of sovereignty itself" Kharge recalled warnings from Babasaheb Ambedkar and Sardar Patel about the dangers posed by the RSS, referencing Patel's 1948 statement: "For the sake of our country, we must uproot forces of hatred and violence." He urged that safeguarding India's democracy requires a complete rejection of RSS ideology. *—SALAR NEWS*

Banu at Dasara: Simha asks if she believes in Hindu gods

Ex-Mysuru MP says Dasara is a religious event, not literary

MYSURU, 24 AUG

Dasara is a religious festival, not a literary event, Former Mysuru MP Pratap Simmha said, as he criticised the State government for asking International Booker Prize winning author Banu Mushtaq to felicitate the celebrations atop Chamundi Hills.

"Dasara is steeped in religiosity and has a history of over four hundred years in Mysuru," he said. "I'm not questioning the writer's literary contributions but want to know if she believes in the Hindu gods."

Mushtaq is from the Muslim community.

Simmha condemned the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for breaking tradition.

As the festival was religious, the government shouldn't invite writers, he said.

"The State Government must explain to the people how Banu Mushtaq is the best choice for Dasara inaugural function," he said.

Awards must not be the criteria for inaugurating the Nada Habba Dasara, he remarked.

"Even Sandalwood actor Rishab Shetty has received the National Award for his cinema. Will the government invite him also?" he asked.

The ten-day Nada Habba Dasara festivities commences by showering flowers on the idols of Goddess Chamundeshwarai, the presiding deity of Mysuru and its royals amid traditional, chanting of vedic hymns on the premises of Chamundeshwari temple atop Chamundi Hills in Mysuru on the first day of Navarathri festival.

Notably, Mushtaq hasn't clarified if she will offer puja to the Hindu deities.

The festivities showcase the State's cultural heritage.

Various programmes will be held during these auspicious days of Navratri, during which the palace, major streets, turnarounds or circles and buildings of Mysuru will be beautified by illuminating them with lights, fondly known as "Deepalankara".

Earlier, Mushtaq had express joy for being asked to inaugurate the festival.

"My father worked at Krishna Raja Sagar (KRS). Every year during Dasara, our family would visit Mysuru. I have seen Sri Jayachamaraja Wadiyar in person. But never in my dreams did I imagine that one day I would be inaugurating Dasara festival myself," she said.

Mushtaq will inaugurate Dasara Mahotsav on 22 September. *—Salar News*

The Dasara festivities showcase the State's cultural heritage and hold various programmes

PHOTO: PTI

Banu Mushtaq, Pratap Simmha

PHOTO: PTI

Tejasvi Surya, CK Ramamurthy will take part

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

BJP to take out car rally from Jayanagar to Dharamasthala

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

- A sanitation worker claimed burying a number of bodies, including those of women with signs of sexual assault, in Dharmasthala, alleging involvement of the temple administration

The BJP South Bengaluru district unit will undertake a pilgrimage to Dharmasthala on Monday under the theme "Dharmada Ulivige Dharma Yuddha" (holy war to protect dharma), led by district president and Jayanagar MLA CK Ramamurthy.

The march will begin with prayers at the Sri Vinayaka Temple in Jayanagar at 6am.

City South MP Tejasvi Surya and Basavanagudi MLA Ravi Subramanya will flag off the convoy near NICE Road.

400 vehicles with leaders and workers will proceed to Lord Manjunath Swamy temple to offer prayers, meet temple 'Dharmadhikari' Veerendra Heggade to convey the BJP's support to the shrine

A sanitation worker claimed burying a number of bodies, including those of women with signs of sexual assault, in Dharmasthala, alleging involvement of the temple administration.

Similarly, JD(S) working president Sa Ra Mahesh will conduct a car rally from Mysuru to Srikshetra Dharmasthala on 25 August to extend moral support to Veerendra Heggade.

Mahesh said that the State government should conduct a probe to expose the network behind the complainant.

—Salar News with Agencies

GETTING SET FOR GANESHA

BBMP workers cleaning a pond in Ulsoor lake for the immersion of Ganesha idols in Bengaluru, on Sunday. Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations will be held on 27 August

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

Congress MLA HD Ranganath follows DKS, praises RSS anthem

TUMAKURU, 24 AUG

Taking a cue from Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, ruling Congress MLA HD Ranganath sang the opening lines of the RSS anthem and praised it on Sunday.

Shivakumar, who also serves as Congress State President, took everyone by surprise on 21 August by singing the RSS anthem during a discussion in the State Assembly.

Speaking to reporters at Kunigal in Tumakuru district, Ranganath crooned opening lines of RSS anthem "Namaste Sada Vatsale". Calling the anthem a "very good song", MLA said he heard it after Dy CM sang it in Assembly.

"I read its meaning. It says we should salute the land where we are born. I see nothing wrong in that. Ours is a secular party, and we must accept good things from others," he said.

However, he flayed BJP, saying, "Right-wingers insist on creating divisions of caste and religion, which we oppose. Their ideology can never match ours. But what is wrong if someone sings a song from the RSS? I am only asking this question." *—PTI*

HD Ranganath, DK Shivakumar

PHOTO: PTI

Somanna proposes renaming of Tumkur University

TUMAKUR, 24 AUG

V Somanna, Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti and Railways, has urged the State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to rename Tumkur University in honour of His Holiness Sri Sri Shivakumara Mahaswamy of Siddaganga Mutt. In his letter, Somanna underscored the saint's lifelong contributions to education and social service, asserting that renaming the university would be a fitting tribute.

"By naming Tumkur University after such a great saint, respect should be paid to the venerable one. That is why they kindly donate to Tumkur University," he stated, appealing for action on the renaming initiative. *—ANI*

Not sidelined, rode with Rahul: DKS to BJP

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday rejected "false and misleading" social media claims that he was made to stand outside a jeep during the Congress-led Voter Adhikar Yatra in Bihar, accusing BJP-linked handles of running a "smear campaign".

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee President said the image being circulated was taken before he joined Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the jeep that led the yatra to the Circuit House in Purnia.

"It's unfortunate (but not surprising) to see BJP-affiliated handles obsess over photo angles, seating arrangements, and who greeted whom-instead of addressing the real issue: vote chori," he wrote.

Shivakumar, who participated in the yatra on Sunday, also asserted that Congress is committed to protecting Kannada pride and fostering harmony.

"If guardians of Kannada rise in anger, even the arrogant may lose their sleep," he said in a veiled warning.

The Voter Adhikar Yatra, led by Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, is aimed at highlighting the alleged vote theft.

"We at the Congress Party, believe in Mohabbat Ki Dukaan. You should drop by sometime - it might just change you," the Shivakumar said.

Earlier in the day, Shivakumar held discussions with Rashtriya Janata Dal leader and former Bihar deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav. *—PTI*

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, asserted that Congress is committed to protecting Kannada pride and fostering harmony

PHOTO: X@DKSHIVAKUMAR

- KarnatakaPradesh Congress Committee President said the image being circulated was taken before he joined Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the jeep that led the yatra to the Circuit House in Purnia

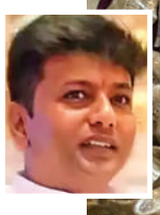
PROTEST AGAINST ANIMAL CRUELTY

Dog lovers and volunteers demand an inquiry into police atrocities on feeders and seek their protection during a protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru, on Sunday

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

Cong's Veerendra to remain in ED custody

BENGALURU, 24 AUG



Congress MLA KC Veerendra, popularly known as 'Puppy', has been remanded to Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody until 28 August in connection with a money laundering investigation linked to illegal betting activities.

According to sources, the 50-year-old MLA was flown in from Sikkim on Sunday morning, where a special ED team apprehended him upon his arrival at Kempegowda International Airport.

To ensure security during the transfer, strict measures were enforced at Terminal 2. Following his arrival, Veerendra was swiftly taken to an undisclosed location for interrogation as the authorities sought to uncover his local connections.

On Friday, the ED executed searches across multiple locations in states including Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Goa, as part of the investigation. This included raids on five casinos in Goa associated with the MLA, named 'Puppy's Casino Gold', 'Ocean Rivers Casino', among others.

Veerendra is accused of operating several online betting platforms, including King567 and Raja567, while his brother, KC Thippeswamy, is alleged to run businesses in Dubai related to these activities. *—PTI*

Jewellery seized by ED from an alleged illegal betting case against State Congress MLA KC Veerendra 'Puppy' and others

PHOTO: PTI

WRONGLY CLAIMS MISCARRIAGE

Mother held for newborn's death at hospital

SHIVAMOGGA, 24 AUG

In a harrowing case that has sent shockwaves through Shivamogga, police have arrested a woman suspected of murdering her newborn son in the toilet of McGann Hospital's maternity ward.

The tragic incident occurred on 16 August, and has been investigated by the Doddapete Police, led by Inspector Ravi Patil.

The lifeless body of the infant was discovered in the toilet, with evidence indicating that his throat had been slit. Hospital staff had noted one case of an admitted woman whose newborn was unaccounted for, leading to suspicion of Shaila, a resident of Timlapura village, who had claimed she experienced a miscarriage at home.

Following a formal complaint from hospital administrators, police tracked Shaila, ultimately taking her into custody after she was discharged. During interrogation, she confessed that the child was hers and admitted to the act of killing him.

Sources suggest that Shaila, already a mother of two, had concealed her pregnancy after undergoing infertility treatment. The investigation continues, examining how she accessed the weapon used in the crime and the broader implications for maternity ward security. *—Salar News*

Sources suggest that Shaila, already a mother of two, had concealed her pregnancy after undergoing infertility treatment

PHOTO: FREEPIK

- Hospital staff had noted one case of an admitted woman whose newborn was unaccounted for, leading to suspicion of Shaila, a resident of Timlapura village, who had claimed she experienced a miscarriage at home

PHOTO: ANI

Cong says will take apt decision on Kerala MLA

T'PURAM, 24 AUG

The Congress in Kerala said on Sunday it would decide on the future of Palakkad MLA Rahul Mamkootathil after consulting senior party leaders, amid mounting pressure and opposition calls for his resignation. Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) chief Sunny Joseph said he and Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan would discuss the matter with senior leaders before taking an "appropriate decision" at the right time. Senior leader K Muraleedharan echoed this stance but noted that leaked audio clips allegedly involving Mamkootathil and a woman make the matter more serious. The party's decision would be made soon and would not be influenced by CPI(M) MLA M Mukesh's refusal to resign despite facing sexual harassment charges.—*PTI*

Ex-J'khand CM under house arrest over land dispute

RANCHI, 24 AUG

Former Jharkhand chief minister and BJP leader Champai Soren was placed under house arrest on Sunday to prevent unrest as tribal groups protested against land acquisition for the proposed Rs 1,074-crore RIMS-2 hospital project in Nagri, police said. Soren's son Babulal and several supporters heading to Ranchi were also detained. Over 20 tribal outfits, farmers and landowners launched a 'Hal Joto, Ropa Ropo' protest, ploughing fields and planting saplings at the site. The project, involving 207 acres, aims to expand the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences with a 2,600-bed hospital and additional medical seats. Calling his detention "undemocratic", Soren pledged support for the tribal cause. Authorities imposed prohibitory orders, to control tensions.—*PTI*

Army Chief visits Algeria to boost military ties

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

In his first foreign trip following Operation Sindoor, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi on Sunday left for Algeria on a four-day visit to explore ways to expand bilateral defence and security ties. The visit comes nearly 10 months after India inked a pact on defence cooperation with the North African nation. New Delhi has been looking at expanding its defence ties with the African nations against the backdrop of China's relentless efforts to expand its strategic heft in the region. India and Algeria inked the agreement in November 2024. Gen Dwivedi will hold high-level meetings with senior Algerian leaders. He will also visit prominent military institutions. —*PTI*

Fear of terrorism diminished in Kashmir: LG Manoj

SRINAGAR, 24 AUG

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has claimed that the atmosphere of fear stemming from terrorism in the Kashmir valley has significantly receded. Speaking to members of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, he highlighted that industrial growth in areas such as Pulwama now surpasses that of Srinagar. "Investments are taking place in areas like Anantnag and Pulwama... The fear of terrorists and their ecosystem has almost ended," Sinha stated. He noted that this year saw only one local terror recruitment and praised the massive youth participation in the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign. The L-G observed that public life has revived, with Lal Chowk remaining vibrant late into the evening, contrasting with its previous gloominess after dark. —*PTI*

Take Trump seriously: Nikki warns India

Nikki says Russian oil purchases are helping fund Putin's war against Ukraine

NEW YORK, 24 AUG

"India must take Trump's point over Russian oil seriously," said Republican leader Nikki Haley, adding that New Delhi must work with the White House to find a solution, "sooner the better".

"Navigating issues like trade disagreements and Russian oil imports demands hard dialogue," Haley posted on social media on Saturday (local time).

She posted on X a portion of the opinion piece she wrote last week for Newsweek amid strain in ties between the two countries after President Donald Trump slapped 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods.

Haley has been facing criticism within her party for favouring India amid tariff tensions between the two countries.

Nikki Haley **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

- Haley said that India must be treated like the "prized free and democratic partner that it is—not an adversary like China." She highlighted decades of "friendship and goodwill" between India and the US, the world's two largest democracies.

In her article Haley said, "Trump is right to target India's massive Russian oil purchases, which are helping to fund Vladimir Putin's brutal war against Ukraine."

However, she added that India must be treated like the "prized free and democratic partner that it is—not an adversary like China."

Haley highlighted decades of "friendship and goodwill" between India and the US, the world's two largest democracies.

It provides a "solid basis to move past the current turbulence," she added.

She said that the US and India "should not lose sight of what matters most: our shared goals." "To face China, the United States must have a friend in India," she added.

"India stands alone in its potential to manufacture at China-like scale for products that can't be quickly or efficiently produced here(in the US)," Haley said. —*PTI*

Indian envoy talks 'fair' trade with US lawmakers

NEW YORK, 24 AUG

Indian Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra engaged in discussions regarding "fair, balanced and mutually beneficial trade ties" with US lawmakers amid escalating tariff tensions between India and the United States. Over 24 hours, Kwatra met four lawmakers, discussing various aspects of bilateral trade cooperation. "Highlighted our perspectives on trade and economic cooperation," he tweeted after meeting Congressman Joe Courtney. In conversations with other congressional members, he emphasized the importance of equitable trade relations and acknowledged India's increasing hydrocarbon purchases from the US as vital for energy security. This effort follows the imposition of high tariffs by the US. —*PTI*

INDIA bloc working for fruitful Bihar results: RaGa

ARARIA/PURNEA/ PATNA, 24 AUG

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday asserted that all the INDIA bloc constituents in Bihar were working unitedly for the upcoming assembly polls and that the results will be fruitful.

Addressing a press conference in Araria, with RJD's Tejashwi Yadav and leaders of other constituents of the INDIA bloc by his side, Gandhi said that the Opposition alliance will soon come out with a common manifesto for the polls, due later this year.

"The INDIA bloc will soon come out with a common manifesto for the Bihar assembly polls. All constituents of the opposition alliance are working unitedly... we are both ideologically and politically aligned, mutually respecting each other. The results would be fruitful," Gandhi said.

Launching a scathing attack on NDA government at the Centre, Gandhi alleged that the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the eastern state was "an institutionalised attempt by the Election Commission to steal votes to help the BJP".

Additionally, Gandhi and Yadav were seen riding motorcycles as the Yatra entered Araria, with people lining the streets to see the two leaders.

Futhermore, Yadav, said that the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' has become a "historic journey" and claimed it has exposed the "reality" of both BJP and EC before the people.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi along with RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and others ride bikes during the Voter Adhikar Yatra in Bihar on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Rahul says 'talks on' about his marriage

In a light-hearted comment, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday quipped that "talks are on" with RJD President Lalu Prasad, a political ally and family friend, regarding his earlier suggestion that the Congress leader should get married.

His comment came after Prasad's son Tejashwi Yadav advised Union Minister Chirag Paswan to consider g marriage. To this, Gandhi said he too received a similar suggestion from Yadav's father two years ago. —*PTI*

Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar with Prime Minister of Fiji Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka in New Delhi on Sunday **PHOTO: X/MEAINDIA**

Fiji PM Rabuka commences 3-day visit to India

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka commenced his three-day official visit to India on Sunday, aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation in sectors such as trade, investment, healthcare, and maritime security.

This is Rabuka's first trip to India since assuming office as the Prime Minister of the South Pacific island nation. He was warmly received at the airport in New Delhi by Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar.

Rabuka is accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Fiji's Health Minister Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu and several senior officials. During his visit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host wide-ranging talks with Rabuka on Monday, focusing on deepening strategic cooperation, followed by a lunch in honour of the visiting dignitary.

According to External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, the visit will "further deepen the India-Fiji partnership across diverse sectors." The ministry highlighted that the two countries share a special relationship built on historical, cultural, and people-to-people ties—*PTI*

Tharoor urges Sri Lanka to avoid revenge politics

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has expressed alarm over the recent arrest of former Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe. Tharoor urged the Sri Lankan government to steer clear of vengeance politics and treat Wickremesinghe with the respect he merits following his decades of service.

Wickremesinghe, 76, was admitted to the intensive care unit at Colombo National Hospital shortly after his arrest on Saturday, where he was denied bail over allegations of misusing state funds during his presidency.

Tharoor posted on X, stating, "Concerned about the detention of former Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickramasinghe on what, on the face of it, seem trivial charges."

The former president faces charges, including misuse of 16.6 million Sri Lankan rupees, reportedly related to a trip to the UK to attend a private event for his wife.

If convicted, the charges could result in a prison sentence ranging from one to 20 years. —*PTI*

Didn't delete ration card holders: Centre

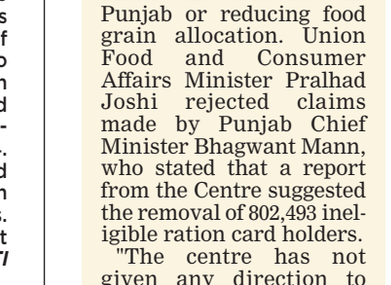
NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The Central Government has denied allegations of deleting beneficiaries under the food law in Punjab or reducing food grain allocation. Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi rejected claims made by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who stated that a report from the Centre suggested the removal of 802,493 ineligible ration card holders.

"The centre has not given any direction to delete the name of any beneficiary in the state of Punjab," Joshi asserted.

He emphasised that 1.41 lakh crore people are entitled to food grains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), with no reduction in allocation. Joshi urged Punjab to clean up beneficiary data, noting over 10 lakh beneficiaries are in doubt, suggesting a risk of black market diversion.

He added, "The names of those who are not eligible should be removed, and the deserving poor should be included." Joshi also stated that the identification of beneficiaries is the responsibility of state governments. —*PTI*



Indo-China trade to resume via Shipki-La

SHIMLA, 24 AUG

China has agreed in principle to the proposal of resuming trade through Shipki-La in Himachal Pradesh's Kinnaur district during the recent visit of its Foreign Minister Wang Yi to India, the state government said on Sunday.

The trade was suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar informed the state government that the Centre had initiated discussions with China for the resumption of border trade through three designated points, including Lipulekh in Uttarakhand and Nathu La in Sikkim. .

Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had written to the Centre urging revival of the historic Indo-Tibetan trade route.

The state government would now take up the matter with the Union Commerce Ministry for completing codal formalities. Shipki-La, formalised as a border trade point played a vital role in trans-Himalayan economic and cultural exchanges. —*PTI*

TN ministers shred Vijay for calling Stalin 'uncle'

CUDDALORE, 24 AUG

Tamil Nadu Agriculture Minister MRK Panneerselvam slammed Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam chief and actor Vijay for addressing Chief Minister MK Stalin as "uncle", saying the actor lacked political decorum.

Cinema and politics are not the same and the actor, swayed by his fan following, spoke as if he was delivering a movie dialogue, the minister claimed.

He said the DMK implemented numerous welfare initiatives.

Tamil Nadu School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi said Vijay should think if he should use intemperate language just because he has launched a political party.

The Chief Minister has a history of 50 years in public life, he said, while reminding Vijay that his family shared a good bond with late DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi, Stalin and Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin.

In Madurai DMK office-bearers put up wall posters condemning Vijay for his remark.

Stalin supporters roast Vijay with 'What bro, very wrong bro' posters **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

CM's Breakfast scheme

The expansion of the CM's Breakfast scheme to government and aided primary schools in urban areas will benefit over 20.59 lakh school students, the Chief Minister said on Sunday.

Free nutritious food and education are provide to children across the stateunder this scheme. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will be present during the expansion of the scheme on 27 August. —*PTI*

'DAYLIGHT ROBBERY'

Naidu will give away TTD land to Oberoi Hotels:YSRCP

TIRUPATI, 24 AUG

YSRCP leader B Karunakar Reddy on Sunday accused Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of "conspiring" to hand over valuable TTD property to Oberoi Hotels.

According to Reddy, 20 acres of prime land owned by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) in Tirupati, valued at Rs 1,500 crore, was exchanged for low-value rural land, resulting in an alleged loss of Rs 1,000 crore.

"Naidu is the mastermind behind a conspiracy to surrender valuable TTD property to Oberoi Hotels under the guise of a land exchange," the former TTD Chairman told reporters.

He further claimed that a special TTD meeting was held on 7 May to approve the deal, followed by a government order on 7 August.

B Karunakar Reddy **PHOTO: ANI**

- Criticising Naidu for now "gifting" a prime spot in the temple city for Oberoi hotels, after previously rejecting their proposal, Reddy called it "daylight robbery."

Criticising Naidu for now "gifting" a prime spot in the temple city for Oberoi hotels, after previously rejecting their proposal, Reddy called it "daylight robbery".

The YSRCP leader claimed that the TDP-led government deliberately omitted land valuations from the agenda and referred to the temple land as "inam land" (gifted land) to make the exchange seem illegitimate.

He sought to know why the government chose temple lands for the project when public land was available in Renigunta and other areas near Tirupati, terming it a "premeditated act of plunder".

Holding Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and TTD Chairman BR Naidu responsible, Reddy demanded the reversal of the government order and urged devotees oppose the move. —*PTI*

AUTHORITIES PROBE RADICALISATION OF YOUTHS IN KASHMIR SCHOOLS

SRINAGAR, 24 AUG

Security agencies in Jammu and Kashmir are intensifying their surveillance on several educational institutions, particularly private schools, due to growing concerns over the alleged radicalisation of young minds, especially among female students.

The concerns also extend to the alleged widespread use of narcotics in some private schools.

The initiative is part of a larger effort to fight back against the transmission of extremist narratives at the ground level.

Fanatical clerics are indoctrinating them with a rigid interpretation of Islam that rejects traditional Kashmiri practices, such as visiting and paying obeisance at the shrines of Sufi saints and Rishis. These customs are being condemned as violations of Islamic teachings.

Some ex-separatist groups are concerned that another religious extremism wave will destabilise the valley's centuries-old "Sufi" tradition.

- Fanatical clerics are indoctrinating them with a rigid interpretation of Islam that rejects Kashmiri practices, such as visiting and praying at the shrines of Sufi saints and Rishis.

The abuse of social media by terrorists has aggravated the issue.

Unregulated madrassas are expanding rapidly compared to conventional educational institutions.

Some people utilise fake images of crimes against innocents to incite fury and revenge. —*PTI*

PHOTO: XXX

Punjab LPG tanker fire: Death toll reaches 7

HOSHIARPUR, 24 AUG

The death toll in Friday night's LPG tanker fire near Mandiala Adda on the Hoshiarpur-Jalandhar Road has risen to seven after four more victims succumbed to severe burns, officials said on Sunday.Deputy Commissioner Aashika Jain confirmed that Manjit Singh, 60, Vijay, 17, Jaswinder Kaur, 65, and Aradhna Verma, 30 all residents of Mandiala — died overnight while on ventilator support. The incident occurred when an LPG tanker collided with a vegetable-laden pickup while turning onto a Dheha link road. Both vehicles caught fire, engulfing 15 shops and four houses nearby. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann announced Rs 2 lakh compensation for each victim's family and free medical treatment for the injured. *—PTI*

15 Pak fishermen held near border in Gujarat

BHUJ, 24 AUG

The Border Security Force (BSF) has arrested 15 Pakistani fishermen and seized an engine-fitted country boat near the Indo-Pak border in Gujarat's Kutch district, officials said on Sunday. Acting on specific intelligence, BSF personnel launched a search operation on Saturday in the Kori Creek area near the 68th battalion's border outpost. During the operation, the fishermen, all Pakistani nationals from Sujawal district in Sindh province, were apprehended. The seized boat contained around 60kg of fish, nine fishing nets, diesel, ice, food supplies, wooden sticks, a mobile phone, and Rs 200 in Pakistani currency. Authorities are questioning the detained fishermen to determine whether they crossed over accidentally or were involved in cross-border violations. *—PTI*

2 Odisha fishermen die in boat due to toxic fumes

BALASORE, 24 AUG

Two fishermen suffocated to death after allegedly inhaling toxic fumes inside a storage chamber of a mechanised boat in Odisha's Balasore district, police said on Sunday. The incident occurred on Saturday at Balaramgudi fishing base near Chandipur. The victims, aged 34 and 31, entered the chamber to collect fish and reportedly lost consciousness, possibly due to inhaling formalin fumes used to preserve fish. Other fishermen rescued them and rushed them to Balasore District Hospital, where doctors declared them dead on arrival. Balaramgudi Marine Police said a case has been registered, and the bodies sent for post-mortem. The exact cause of death will be confirmed after the report, and investigations are on. *—PTI*

Student charred to death in Arunachal school fire

ITANAGAR, 24 AUG

An eight-year-old boy died and three others were injured in a fire at a government residential school in Arunachal Pradesh's Shi-Yomi district early on Sunday, police said. The incident occurred around 2am at the boys' hostel of Papikrung Government Residential School, Superintendent of Police SK Thongdok confirmed. The deceased, identified as Tashi Jempen, was a Class 3 student from Chango village. The injured students Lukhi Pujen, 8, Tanu Pujen, 9 and Tayi Pujen, 11, were taken to a hospital in Tato, 85 km away, and later shifted to the Zonal General Hospital in Aalo for better treatment. Their condition is stable, officials said. A police team investigated the cause of the fire. The electricity supply to the area has been cut off. *—PTI*

Torrential rains flood J&K, vital bridge damaged

Union Minister Rajnath Singh visited victims of cloudburst

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, 24 AUG

Heavy rains battered most parts of Jammu and Kashmir overnight, triggering flood-like situation in several low-lying areas and causing damage to a vital bridge on the Jammu-Pathankot national highway.

Jammu recorded 190.4 mm rainfall the second-highest downpour this month in a century.

People were asked to stay away from water bodies and landslide-prone areas amid a forecast of intense rainfall with possibility of cloudbursts in high altitude till 27 August.

In Jammu, 45 students of the Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine were evacuated to safety after floodwaters submerged the ground floor of the hostel complex, where over seven feet of water from the overflowing canal had entered this morning.

Normal life was disrupted in Jammu city after rains inundated several areas.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah special priority is being given to clearing waterlogged areas, restoring drainage systems, and ensuring the immediate resumption of essential services in affected areas.

The Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Leh national highways were open despite heavy rains, while a few roads in the state were closed due to landslides. Several ribvesr in the state were in spate.

Landslides were reported in Rajouri and Poonch in Jammu region and Gurez in north Kashmir, the officials said.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday met 16 victims of the recent cloudburst in Chisoti village, who were undergoing treatment at a government hospital in Jammu.

Singh, who was accompanied by Union minister and Udhampur MP Jitendra Singh and J-K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was very concerned about cloudbursts in the state.

Meanwhile, in Himachal Pradesh 400 roads including two national highways were closed as heavy rains continued to lash parts of the state.

A yellow alert was forecast in seven districts. *—PTI*

Portion of a bridge on the Jammu-Pathankot national highway after getting damaged due to overflowing of Sahar Khad nallah following heavy rains in Kathua district in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

2,31,195 IDENTIFIED

SC directs boundary demarcation of wetlands in 2 months

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

- The top court made clear that inaction on the part of these State Wetland Authorities would compel it to pass coercive orders against those States which have failed to comply with the direction issued earlier.

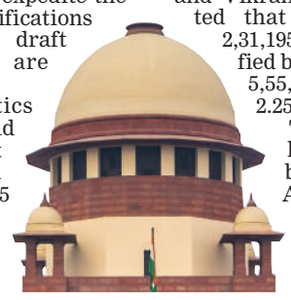
Noting that state wetland authorities are moving at a snail's pace, the Supreme Court has directed states to expedite the ground truthing and boundary demarcation of wetlands within two months.

The court said the exercise carried out by the authorities reflects the sorry state of affairs and the directions issued have not yielded positive results.

The top court made clear that inaction on the part of these State Wetland Authorities would compel it to pass coercive orders against those States which have failed to comply with the direction issued earlier.

The apex court said the Union of India shall coordinate with the Wetland Authorities and expedite the issuance of notifications for which the draft notifications are already in place.

"The statistics furnished would also reflect that wetlands, which are less than 2.25 hectares, are required to be identified as prescribed under the extant rules and the affidavits of the state governments of wetland authorities shall also delve upon as to the manner and method in which steps have been taken or being taken to protect them," the court said.



The court posted the matter for hearing on October 7.

The counsel, appearing for intervenors Manu Bhatnagar and Vikrant Tongad, submitted that apart from the 2,31,195 wetlands identified by ISRO, there were 5,55,557 wetlands of 2.25 hectare.

The top court was hearing a PIL by bird enthusiast Anand Arya, advocate MK Balakrishnan and NGO Vanashakti. *—PTI*

Kerala HC bars political activities in temples

KOCHI, 24 AUG

The Kerala High Court has mandated the Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar Devaswom Boards to prohibit political activities within temple premises. This ruling, issued by Justices Raja Vijayaraghavan V and KV Jayakumar, was prompted by a petition from N Prakash, a resident of Ernakulam.

Prakash highlighted concerns over various temples, including the Tali Temple in Kozhikode and the Sree Indilayappan Temple in Attingal, being used for political purposes. He argued, "Such activities are inappropriate and hurt the feelings of the devotees."

The Malabar Devaswom Board contended that it was not practical to monitor events beyond traditional poojas and rituals. They stated, "Misuse of the temple... is actionable under the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988; no direction from the court is necessary."

However, the court reinforced that the Act explicitly prohibits using temple premises for political activities, as well as the allocation of religious funds for political parties.

The judges instructed the Boards to ensure compliance and report any violations to the law enforcement. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Andhra couple's death sentence commuted to life

KOLKATA, 24 AUG

The Calcutta High Court has commuted the death sentence of a couple from Andhra Pradesh, convicted of the murder of a one-year-old child, to life imprisonment for at least 40 years without remission.

The court held that objections raised on behalf of appellants Sk Hasina Sultana and Sk Vannur Sha with regard to territorial jurisdiction of the court in West Bengal to try such a case had no standing.

The couple allegedly murdered the child in Secunderabad, packed his body in a bag and put it in the Howrah-bound Falaknuma Express in 2016. The couple did not have any criminal records. The child was born out of wedlock between Hasina and another man. *—PTI*

FESTIVAL OF JOY

People from the Malayali community make a 'Pookalam' ahead of the Onam festival celebrations in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. Onam is a major harvest festival which will be celebrated in Kerala on 26 August **PHOTO: PTI**

Ex-CRPF DG Anish Dayal Singh is new deputy NSA

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Anish Dayal Singh, former Director General of the CRPF and ITBP, has been appointed as the new Deputy National Security Advisor (NSA), responsible for internal affairs. Singh, a 1988-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Manipur cadre, retired in December 2024, bringing nearly 30 years of experience from the Intelligence Bureau and leadership roles at the ITBP and CRPF.

Singh will oversee key areas including Jammu and Kashmir, Naxal, and the Northeastern insurgency. His tenure at the CRPF saw significant initiatives, such as combating Naxalism and restructuring battalions for operational efficiency. He supported a policy to enhance morale of CRPF personnel. *—PTI*

Kolkata law college gangrape: Police submits chargesheet

KOLKATA, 24 AUG

A chargesheet has been filed against four individuals in the alleged gangrape of a law student on her college campus in Kolkata, police reported. The chargesheet was submitted to the Court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Alipore, naming Monojit Mishra, the prime accused and an alumnus, alongside Zaib Ahmed and Pramit Mukherjee.

"The charges, based on technical, scientific and circumstantial evidence, ranged from gang rape, forcible wrongful confinement, and kidnapping to hiding evidence and misleading the probe," stated a senior officer.

All four accused are currently in judicial custody.

Monojit Mishra who was arrested in connection with the gangrape of a law student in Kolkata, being produced at a city court **PHOTO: PTI**

Following the incident on 25 June, Mishra, employed temporarily at the college from 2024, was terminated, while Ahmed and Mukherjee faced expulsion. Security guard Pinaki Banerjee was arrested for allegedly abetting the crime.

The Trinamool Chhatra Parishad denied any association with Mishra. *—PTI*

Can't learn healthcare, psych remotely: UGC

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has directed all higher education institutions to stop offering programmes in healthcare and allied disciplines, including psychology and nutrition through Open and Distance Learning or online mode from the 2025 academic session.

The ban under the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act, 2021, applies to psychology, microbiology, food and nutrition science, biotechnology, clinical nutrition and dietetics courses.

UGC secretary Manish Joshi said that in the case of programmes with multiple specialisation such as Bachelor of Arts (English, Hindi, Punjabi, Economics, History, Mathematics, Public Administration, Philosophy, Political Science, Statistics, Human Rights and Duties, Sanskrit, Psychology, Geography, Sociology, Women Studies), then only those specialisation covered in NCAHP Act, 2021 shall be withdrawn.

The decision comes amid concerns over quality standards in professional training.

The 24th Distance Education Bureau Working Group meeting held in April also recommended this measure, which was formalised during recent UGC meetings.

The higher education regulator prohibits the offering of professional and practical-based courses through distance learning. *—PTI*

'Grew up shy, did not think will fly to space'

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

- Shukla said he often heard stories of Rakesh Sharma's historic spaceflight, but the desire to travel to space came much later in life.

Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla on Sunday reflected on his unexpected journey to space, revealing he grew up as a "shy and reserved" child who never dreamt of becoming an astronaut.

Speaking at an Indian Air Force event, Shukla said he often heard stories of Rakesh Sharma's historic spaceflight, but the desire to travel to space came much later in life.

Shukla recently became the first Indian to visit the International Space Station (ISS) as part of the Axiom 4 mission and shared his experiences from the groundbreaking expedition.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh honoured the four Gaganyaan astronauts, including Shukla, calling Gaganyaan-4 mission a new chapter. *—PTI*

INSTANT UPDATES

UP gets QR code based property checks

LUCKNOW, 24 AUG

Uttar Pradesh will introduce QR code-based verification of property ownership, integrate land registry data with revenue department records for instant title updates, and simplify rent agreements with minimal stamp duty, Minister Ravindra Jaiswal has said.

The Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Fee, Registration, said the reforms are part of the state's ambitious Vision 2047 plan, with some of the initiatives expected to roll out by March 2026.

MoS Ravindra jaiswal said that the new initiatives are a part of Uttar Pradesh's Vision 2047 plan **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE**

Revenue officials will now verify records before a property transaction is finalised. The buyer's name will be updated immediately, giving them instant ownership rights.

Jaiswal, a BJP MLA from Varanasi, said another major initiative aims to encourage property owners to formalise tenancy agreements by reducing high stamp duty charges.A fixed stamp duty charge of Rs 500 to Rs 1,000 will be introduced. The department is also working to simplify family property settlements.

Moreover, settlements of family disputes for up to four generations will be allowed at a fixed charge of Rs 5,000, to ensure clarity and reduce litigation.

He said Uttar Pradesh has witnessed a surge in property registrations, owing to improved law and order and investor confidence.

Jaiswal also said the department will soon launch "ATMs" to withdraw commonly used stamp papers of Rs 10, Rs 20, Rs 50, and Rs 100 denominations, which see annual sales of nearly Rs 800 crore.

The state recently announced a stamp duty rebate for women buyers, allowing a one per cent reduction for properties valued up to Rs 1 crore. *—PTI*

EVEN GODS AREN'T SPARED

A man carries temple belongings after flash floods hit the outskirts of Jammu on Sunday. The region is seeing multiple flash floods, which experts have deemed to be manmade. Lives and livelihoods are at stake ***PHOTO: PTI***

Fake records & missteps aided polio's comeback

For the past decade, Sughra Ayaz has travelled door to door in southeastern Pakistan, pleading with parents to allow children to be vaccinated against polio to wipe out the paralytic disease.

She hears their demands and fears. Some are practical – families need basics like food and water more than vaccines.

Amid rampant misinformation and pressure for the campaign to succeed, Ayaz said, some managers have instructed workers to falsely mark children as immunised. And the vaccines, which must be kept cold, aren't always stored correctly, she added.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and partners embarked on their polio campaign in 1988 with the bold goal of eradication — a feat seen only once for human diseases, with smallpox in 1980. They came close several times, including in 2021, when just five cases of the natural virus were reported in Pakistan and Afghanistan. But since then, cases rebounded, hitting 99 last year.

Afghanistan and Pakistan remain the only countries with transmission of polio.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative has been derailed by mismanagement and what insiders describe as blind allegiance to an outdated strategy, according to workers, polio experts and internal materials obtained by The Associated Press.

Officials have falsified vaccination records, selected unqualified people, and dismissed concerns about the oral vaccine, sparking outbreaks, according to documents shared by staffers from GPEI – one of the largest public health campaigns, with over USD 20 billion spent and nearly every country involved.

Remote villages are hard to reach, some cultural and religious authorities instruct against vaccination, and hundreds of polio workers and security staff have been killed because of their alignment with a Western-led initiative.

Some managers have instructed workers to falsely mark children as immunised ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Dr Jamal Ahmed, WHO's Polio Director, defended progress in those two countries. He believes authorities will end the spread of polio in the next 12 to 18 months. Its latest goal for eradication is 2029. Children typically need four doses of two drops each to be considered fully immunised.

Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta, who has served on advisory groups for WHO, the Gates Foundation and others, said campaign officials should listen to criticism.

The documents flagged multiple cases of falsified vaccination records, health workers being replaced by untrained relatives and workers improperly administering vaccines. WHO officials noted, "vaccinators did not know about vaccine management," citing failure to keep doses cold. They also found sloppy or falsified reporting, with workers noting "more used vaccine vials than were actually supplied".

According to an August 2017 report from Kandahar, Afghanistan, local authorities and others interfered in choosing vaccinators, "resulting in the selection of underage and illiterate volunteers".

Vaccine workers and health officials in Afghanistan and Pakistan told AP it's hard for campaign leadership to grasp the difficulties in the field. Ayaz described "fake finger marking" — placing the ink used to show a child is vaccinated on their pinky even when no vaccine has been given.Before the first polio vaccine was developed in 1955, the disease — spread mostly from person to person, through contaminated water and via faecal particles — was among the world's most feared, paralysing thousands annually. Polio is mainly spread when people are exposed to infected water.

Most public health experts agree the oral vaccine should be pulled as soon as possible. The injectable vaccine is also more expensive and requires more training to administer.

Last year, former WHO scientist Dr T Jacob John twice emailed WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, calling for a course correction. John received no response.

Ahmed also pointed to the success the WHO and partners had in eliminating polio from India. Today, nearly all of the world's polio cases -- mostly in Africa and the Middle East -- are mutated viruses from the oral vaccine, except for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Scott Barrett, a Columbia University professor, called for an inquiry into how things went so wrong, particularly with a failed effort in 2016, when authorities removed a strain from the oral vaccine. They miscalculated, leading to outbreaks in more than 40 countries that paralysed at least 3,000 children.

With an annual budget of about USD 1 billion, the polio initiative is among the most expensive in all of public health. This year, the US withdrew from the WHO, and President Donald Trump has cut foreign aid.

Villagers have protested the cost, staging hundreds of boycotts of immunisation campaigns since 2023. They ask for medicine, food and electricity instead. The campaign is also up against a wave of misinformation, including that the vaccine is made from pig urine or will make children reach puberty early. — *PTI*

SALAR ساہر

Hydration may be your best defence against stress

Most people know they should drink more water, but our new research reveals an unexpected consequence of falling short: it could be making everyday stress significantly harder to handle.

Our study, published in the Journal of Applied Physiology, found that people who drank less than 1.5 litres daily showed dramatically higher levels of cortisol – the body's primary stress hormone – when faced with stressful situations. The finding suggests that chronic mild dehydration may amplify stress responses in ways we're only beginning to understand.

We tested healthy young adults by dividing them into two groups based on their usual fluid intake. One group drank less than 1.5 litres daily, while the other exceeded standard recommendations of roughly two litres for women and 2.5 litres for men. After maintaining these patterns for a week, participants faced a laboratory stress test involving public speaking and mental arithmetic.

Both groups felt equally nervous and showed similar heart rate increases. But the low-fluid group experienced a much more pronounced cortisol surge – a response that could prove problematic if repeated daily over months or years. Chronic elevation of cortisol has been linked to increased risks of heart disease, kidney problems and diabetes.

Surprisingly, the under-hydrated participants didn't report feeling thirstier than their well-hydrated counterparts. Their bodies, however, told a different story. Darker, more concentrated urine revealed their dehydration, demonstrating that thirst isn't always a reliable indicator of fluid needs.

The mechanism behind this stress amplification involves the body's sophisticated water management system. When dehydration is detected, the brain releases vasopressin, a hormone that instructs the kidneys to conserve water and maintain blood volume. But vasopressin doesn't work in isolation; it also influences the brain's stress-response system, potentially heightening cortisol release during difficult moments.

Sleep, exercise, nutrition and social connections all play roles in how we handle life's challen ges. Water now emerges as a potentially underapp reciated ally in stress management

A simple check involves monitoring urine colour: pale yellow typically indicates adequate hydration, while darker shades suggest increased fluid needs

Double burden

This creates a physiological double burden. Although vasopressin helps preserve precious water, it simultaneously makes the body more reactive to stress. For someone navigating daily pressures – work deadlines, family responsibilities, financial concerns – this heightened reactivity could accumulate into significant health harms over time.

Our findings add hydration to the growing list of lifestyle factors that influence stress resilience. Sleep, exercise, nutrition and social connections all play roles in how we handle life's challenges. Water now emerges as a potentially underappreciated ally in stress management.

The implications extend beyond individual physiology. In societies where chronic stress is increasingly recognised as a public health crisis, hydration emerges as a surprisingly accessible intervention. Unlike many stress-management strategies that require significant time or resources, drinking adequate water is straightforward and universally available. However, our research doesn't suggest that water is a cure-all for stress. The study involved healthy young adults in controlled laboratory conditions, which cannot fully replicate the complex psychological and social stressors people face in everyday life. Hydration alone cannot address all aspects of real-world stress. We need long-term studies to confirm whether maintaining optimal hydration genuinely reduces stress-related health problems over years or decades.

Individual water needs vary considerably based on age, body size, activity levels and climate. Guidelines provide useful targets, but tea, coffee, milk and water-rich foods also contribute to daily fluid intake. The key is consistency rather than perfection.

A simple check involves monitoring urine colour: pale yellow typically indicates adequate hydration, while darker shades suggest increased fluid needs. This practical approach removes guesswork from an essential daily habit.

Good health stems from accumulated daily choices rather than dramatic interventions. Although proper hydration won't eliminate life's pressures, it might help ensure your body is better equipped to handle them. In a world where stress feels inevitable, that physiological advantage could prove more valuable than we've previously recognised.

Water remains essential for life in ways that extend far beyond basic survival. Our research suggests it may also be essential for managing the psychological demands of modern life, offering a simple but powerful tool for supporting both physical and mental resilience. —*The Conversation*

The finding suggests that chronic mild dehydration may amplify stress responses in ways we're only beginning to understand ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

More wildfire disasters are reported, yet less land is burning

Worldwide, an estimated 440 million people were exposed to a wildfire encroaching on their home at some point between 2002 and 2021, new research shows. That's roughly equivalent to the entire population of the European Union, and the number has been steadily rising – up 40 per cent over those two decades.

With intense, destructive fires often in the news, it can seem like more land is burning. And in parts of the world, including western North America, it is.

Globally, however, our team of fire researchers also found that the total area burned actually declined by 26 per cent over those two decades.

How is that possible?

We found the driving reasons for those changes in Africa, which has the vast majority of all land burned, but the total burned area there has been falling. Agricultural activities in Africa are increasingly fragmenting wildland areas that are prone to burning. A cultivated farm field and roads can help stop a fire's spread. But more farms and development in wildland areas also means more people can be exposed to wildfires.

Drawing on our expertise in climate and wildfire sciences and geospatial modelling, we analysed global wildfire activity over the past two decades. The results highlight some common misperceptions and show how the fire risk to humans is changing.

Global burned area down, intense fires up

Wildfire is a natural process that has existed for as long as vegetation has covered the Earth. Occasional fires in a forest are healthy. They clear out dead wood and leaf and branch litter, leaving less fuel for future fires to burn. However, intense fires can also pose serious threats to human lives, infrastructure and economies.

North and South America have both experienced a rise in intense wildfires over the past two decades. Some notable examples include the 2018 Camp Fire in California and the 2023 record-breaking Canadian wildfires, which generated widespread smoke that blanketed large parts of Canada and the eastern United States, and even reached Europe.

The increase in intense wildfires aligns with the intensification of fire weather around the world. Heat, low humidity and strong winds can make wildfires more likely to spread and harder to control. The number of days conducive to extreme fire behaviour and new fire ignitions has increased by more than 50 per cent over the past four decades globally, elevating the odds that the amount of land burned in a particular region sets a new record.

Firefighters battle the Pickett Fire burning in the Aetna Springs area of Napa County, California ***PHOTO: PTI***

But fire weather is not the only factor affecting wildfire risk. The amount of dry vegetation, and whether it's in a continuous stretch or broken up, influences fire risk. So do ignition sources, such as vehicles and power lines in wildland areas. Human activities can start fires and fuel climate change, which further dries out the land, amplifying wildfire activity. Fire suppression practices that don't allow low-intensity fires to burn can lead to the accumulation of flammable vegetation, raising the risk of intense fires.

North America is a fraction of total burned area

In recent years, a growing number of wildfire disasters in North America, Europe and Australia have captured global attention. From the deadly 2025 Los Angeles fires to the devastating 2019-2020 Australian bushfires and the 2018 wildfire in Athens, Greece, flames have increasingly encroached upon human settlements, claiming lives and livelihoods.

However, wildfire exposure isn't limited to these high-profile regions – we simply hear more about them.

The United States, Europe and Australia account for less than 2.5 per cent of global human exposure to wildfire. Human exposure to fire occurs when people's homes fall directly within the area burned by a wildfire.

In stark contrast, Africa alone accounts for approximately 85 per cent of all wildfire exposures and 65 per cent of the global burned area.

Remarkably, just five central African countries – the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Mozambique, Zambia and Angola – experience half of all global human exposure to wildfires, even though they account for less than 3 per cent of the global population. These countries receive sufficient moisture to support plant growth, yet they are dry enough that trees and plants burn in frequent fires.

Regional trends and drivers of wildfire

We found that wildfire exposure increased across all continents except Europe and Oceania, but the underlying drivers of the increase varied by region. In Africa, agricultural expansion has led to more people living in fire-prone areas.In North America, particularly the United States, intensifying fire weather – the hot, dry, windy conditions conducive to spreading fires – has led to increasingly uncontrollable wildfires that threaten human settlements.

In South America, a combination of rising drought frequency and severity, intensifying heat waves and agricultural expansion has amplified wildfire intensity and increased the population in fire-prone regions.

In Asia, growing populations in fire-prone areas, combined with more days of fire-friendly weather, led to increased human exposure to wildfires.

In contrast, Europe and Oceania have seen declining wildfire exposures, largely due to more people moving to cities and fewer living in rural, fire-prone zones.

What to do about it

Communities can take steps to prevent destructive wildfires from spreading.

For example, vegetation management, such as prescribed fires, can avoid fuelling intense fires. Public education, policy enforcement and engineering solutions – such as vegetation reduction and clearance along roads and power lines – can help reduce human-caused ignitions.

As climate change intensifies fire weather and people continue to move into fire-prone zones, proactive mitigation will be increasingly critical. —*The Conversation*

Pakistan & Bangladesh mend ties after 13 years

Pak's DyCM visits Dhaka, expected to sign a slew of MoUs

DHAKA, 24 AUG

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held back-to-back talks with leaders of various political parties of Bangladesh, hours after his arrival in Dhaka to boost bilateral ties.

Dar, also the Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan, on Saturday met with the leaders of former prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Bangladesh's largest Islamist party, Jamaat-e-Islami.

He also met with the leaders of student-led National Citizen Party (NCP), floated recently with interim government chief Professor Muhammad Yunus's blessings.

A six-member BNP delegation led by its secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir held a meeting with Dar at the Pakistan Embassy in Dhaka. Their discussions reportedly focused on deepening bilateral ties.

The talks also covered reviving the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), while Pakistan expressed its wish to see fair elections in Bangladesh.

Dar later held a press conference at his Pakistan embassy when he urged everyone in the gathering to visit his country to engage with their counterparts and contribute to this "new phase of our reinvigorated partnership".

Dar is the senior-most Pakistani leader to visit Bangladesh since 2012, with Islamabad calling it a "significant milestone in Pakistan-Bangladesh relations". Pakistan's Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan is already in Bangladesh on a four-day visit to enhance bilateral economic ties.

Dar is scheduled to meet Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and the interim government's Foreign Affairs adviser, Touhis Hossain.

Over half a dozen agreements and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) could be signed after his talks with Hossain relating to bilateral business and trade alongside diplomacy, according to officials concerned.

Other deals could include visa exemption for diplomatic passport holders, a cultural exchange MoU, cooperation between foreign service academies, a joint trade and investment group, and MoUs on strategic studies and state news agency cooperation, officials added. —*PTI*

Pakistan Deputy Chief Minister Ishaq Dar met with Bangladesh's Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus in Dakha on Sunday. Dar is the senior-most Pakistani leader to visit Bangladesh since 2012 **PHOTO: X @CHIEFADVISERGOB**

NO RADIATION DETECTED

Moscow says Kyiv hit a nuke plant as Ukraine marks I-day

MOSCOW, 24 AUG

Russia accused Ukraine Sunday of launching drone attacks that sparked a fire at a nuclear power plant in its western Kursk region overnight, as Ukraine celebrated 34 years since its independence.

Russian officials said several power and energy facilities were targeted in the overnight strikes. The fire at the nuclear facility was quickly extinguished with no injuries reported. While the attack damaged a transformer, radiation levels remained within normal ranges.

US has blocked Ukraine from using Washington-supplied long-range missiles to strike inside Russia: Report

The United Nations' nuclear watchdog said it was aware of media reports that a transformer at the plants had caught fire "due to military activity," but hadn't received independent confirmation.

The incidents occurred as Ukraine marked Independence Day, commemorating its 1991 declaration of independence from the Soviet Union. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delivered remarks in a video address from Kyiv's Independence Square, emphasizing the nation's resolve.

"We are building a Ukraine that will have enough strength and power to live in security and peace," Zelenskyy said.

"What our future will be is up to us alone," he said.

Meanwhile, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney arrived in Kyiv on Sunday morning for meetings with Zelenskyy.

Meanwhile, Norway announced significant new military aid Sunday, pledging about 7 billion kroner (USD 695 million) for air defence systems. Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said Norway and Germany are jointly funding two Patriot systems, including missiles, with Norway also helping procure air defence radar.

Meanwhile, fighting continued on the front line in eastern Ukraine, where Russia claimed Saturday it seized two villages in the Donetsk. —*PTI*

Nepal joins International Big Cat Alliance

KATHMANDU, 24 AUG

Nepal has officially become a member of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA). "Nepal has formally joined the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) by signing the Framework Agreement," announced the IBCA on on Saturday. The IBCA was established with a view to fostering international cooperation for conservation of seven big cats, including tiger, leopard and snow leopard. With snow leopard, tiger and common leopard in its landscape, Nepal's joining the IBCA will strengthen global collaboration for big cat conservation," the IBCA said. The IBCA "congratulated the Government of Nepal for this significant step towards shared ecologically significant step towards shared ecological security." —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Assistant director of 'Emily in Paris' dies during filming

VENICE, 24 AUG

Diego Borella, a 47-year-old assistant director, has tragically died while filming the fifth season of 'Emily in Paris' in Venice. According to La Repubblica, he collapsed in front of colleagues at the Hotel Danieli around 19.00 local time. Despite the immediate response of the show's medical staff, Borella was pronounced dead at the scene. A spokesperson for Paramount Television Studios said, "We are deeply saddened to confirm the sudden passing of a member of the 'Emily in Paris' production family," adding, "Our hearts go out to the individual's family and loved ones during this incredibly difficult time." Filming has reportedly been temporarily suspended following this incident. The series starring Lily Collins, is set to return this year. —*Salar News*

Pak train drivers threaten to strike over safety issues

LAHORE, 24 AUG

Train drivers from the Pakistan Railways (PR) have voiced their discontent over being held responsible for recent derailments, warning of a nationwide strike if the use of 'defective' wagons continues. Karim Bakhsh, President of the PR Train Drivers Association (Multan), remarked, "We are quite concerned that the drivers are being blamed... even though such unfortunate incidents occur due to wagons and coaches lacking brakes." Irfan Iqbal, President of the Train Drivers Association (Lahore), emphasised the unjust nature of blaming drivers when vital safety devices are failing. He said the association would monitor the authorities' responses. —*ANI*

Amid rain threats, 19K people moved from Pak Punjab

LAHORE, 24 AUG

Authorities in Punjab have declared a high alert as over 19,000 people have been evacuated from flood-affected areas in anticipation of a new monsoon spell. The Punjab government initiated evacuation procedures along the Sutlej River, with Rescue 1122 spokesperson Farooq Ahmad confirming that the evacuations were crucial ahead of the impending weather changes. The Sutlej River remains the epicenter of the crisis, with the next 96 hours deemed critical for residents. Additional heavy rain and flash floods are also expected in the already beleaguered Gilgit-Baltistan region. Meanwhile, at least 11 people, including three children, died and 47 injured on Sunday as torrential rains and windstorms battered parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. —*PTI*

Lankan Oppn unitedly condemns ex-president's arrest

COLOMBO, 24 AUG

- Leaders of all the Opposition parties held a joint press conference in Colombo to protest the arrest of Wickremesinghe over alleged misuse of state funds during his tenure.

Sri Lankan Opposition parties gathered in Colombo on Sunday to condemn the arrest of former president Ranil Wickremesinghe, calling it "undemocratic" and "petty act of political vengeance."

Leaders of all Opposition parties held a joint press conference in Colombo to protest the arrest of Wickremesinghe over alleged misuse of state funds during his tenure.

"Our country is used to a very open democratic practices," said Maithripala Sirisena, who served as the president of Sri Lanka from January 2015 to November 2019. "These sort of actions go against those basic principles."

Sagara Kariyawasam the General Secretary of the Sri Lanka People's Front (SLPP) said his party was at variance with Wickremesinghe's politics, "but we have to oppose this act of attempting to silence opposition through intimidation by the state."

Meanwhile the Colombo National Hospital Sunday morning said that Wickremesinghe,76, was still in the intensive care unit (ICU).

Dr Rukshan Bellana, the director of the hospital said the former president was still under observation for after suffering from dehydration.

Bellana said Wickremesinghe needed at least three more days in the ICU and his court appearance on Tuesday would not be possible. Wickremesinghe was shifted to the ICU on Saturday of the Colombo National Hospital, a day after he was arrested. —*PTI*

Israeli airstrikes target Houthis in Yemen's capital

KYIV, 24 AUG

Israeli airstrikes hit Yemen's capital, Sanaa, early on Sunday, reported the Houthi-run al-Masirah channel. This operation comes just days after Yemen's Iran-backed rebels launched cluster munitions toward Israel. These strikes mark the first attack on Sanaa since 17 August, when Israel targeted energy infrastructure believed to be utilised by the Houthis. Israel has yet to confirm the latest strikes.

The Iran-backed Houthis have aggressively launched missiles and drones towards Israel and targeted vessels in the Red Sea for over 22 months, claiming these actions are in solidarity with Palestinians amid ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip. Most missiles are intercepted before reaching their destination.

An Israeli Air Force official, who requested anonymity under military protocols, stated, "The projectile fired from Yemen towards Israel on Friday night marked a new threat." The missile was identified as a cluster munition, a type designed to disperse multiple explosives upon detonation. This marks the first instance of the Houthis launching such munitions at Israel since they began their rocket assaults in 2023.

Meanwhile, Israeli soldiers shot dead at least four Palestinian aid-seekers in Gaza. —*PTI*

Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney joins Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as they take part in a wreath laying ceremony at the memorial wall, in Kyiv on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Ukraine freedom fighters reminisce the struggle

KYIV, 24 AUG

As Ukraine marks its 34th Independence Day, leaders of the freedom movements said that Russia's attempt to take control of the country is nothing new. Russia used political pressure, social division and the sidelining of pro-Western voices, eventually paving the way for the full-scale invasion.

Oleksandr Nechyporenko said Ukraine's tolerance toward agents of Russian influence was a major mistake. "We should have been more firm, more radical".

Decisions made in the early years of independence continue to weigh heavily as Ukraine now fights for survival against Russia. One of the most consequential was the choice to surrender the vast nuclear arsenal left on Ukrainian soil after the Soviet collapse.

"The path we were supposed to take with the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal — about five thousand nuclear warheads — that path should have given us the opportunity to effectively use this potential for integration with the West," said Yurii Kostenko, a scholar and politician who led negotiations on Ukraine's nuclear disarmament in the early 1990s.

He said that had Ukraine received NATO ascension back then, much would be different now.

But instead, Kostenko recalls Ukraine being eventually pressured into surrendering its warheads to Russia, receiving almost nothing in return. —*PTI*

Kim supervises anti-air missiles tests

SEOUL, 24 AUG

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test-firing of two types of new antiair missiles, state media said Sunday, displaying his expanding military capabilities as the South Korean and U.S. militaries carry out joint drills.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said the test Saturday proved the missiles effective in countering aerial threats such as drones and cruise missiles, and that Kim assigned unspecified "important" tasks to defence scientists ahead of a major political conference expected early next year.

The test coincided with new South Korean President Lee Jae Myung 's trip to Tokyo for a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, where they vowed to strengthen bilateral cooperation and their trilateral partnership with the US to address common challenges, including North Korea's nuclear ambitions. —*PTI*

North Korea test-fires a new anti-air missile at an undisclosed location **PHOTO: X**

PHOTO: FREEPIK

EU halts package shipments to US as tariffs take effect

ATHENS, 23 AUG

- On Saturday, postal services in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Italy have ceased shipping most merchandise to the US with France and Austria set to follow on Monday

International postal services are suspending shipments to the United States as confusion reigns over the end of the "de minimis" exemption for low-value packages. This exemption allowed goods worth under $800 to enter the US duty-free, with 1.36 billion packages sent in 2024 alone, valued at $64.6 billion.

Effective this Saturday, postal services in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Italy have ceased shipping most merchandise to the US with France and Austria set to follow on Monday. The UK's Royal Mail will halt shipments on Tuesday to accommodate the new duty regulations on items valued over USD 100.

DHL, Europe's largest shipping provider, stated, "Key questions remain unresolved," as it announced it would no longer accept parcels for the US from business clients. A recent trade framework between the US and EU imposes a 15 per cent tariff on most products, applying to packages under USD 800 as well.

PostNL in the Netherlands noted that despite the new duties, US authorities lack a system to collect them, urging senders to ship immediately. PostEurop warned that, without resolution by 29 August, all its members may halt shipments. —*PTI*

STRICT PUNISHMENT

UK to ban criminals from travel, sports, concerts & pubs

LONDON, 24 AUG

Criminals will be barred from pubs, concerts and sports matches under new sentencing powers widening the scope of punishments unveiled by the UK government on Sunday.

Judges in the country will be able to curtail offenders' freedoms with driving limits, travel bans and restriction zones confining them into specific areas as part of the new measures.

The changes will toughen up community punishments to deter reoffending and force offenders back onto the straight-and-narrow, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) said.

Offenders coming out of prison and supervised by the Probation Service will also face similar restrictions and an expanded mandatory drug testing regime.

In future, criminals without known drug habits will face this scrutiny, not just those with a history of substance misuse, the MoJ said.

Offenders who break the rules face being brought back to court or hauled back to prison as punishment depending on the sentence they are serving.

Breaking the new rules could land the criminals back in prison **PHOTO: X**

Currently, judges in Britain are able to give out limited bans for specific crimes, for example football bans for crimes committed inside a stadium on match day.

"When criminals break society's rules, they must be punished. Those serving their sentences in the community must have their freedom restricted there too. These new punishments should remind all offenders that, under this government, crime does not pay," UK Justice Secretary Shabana Mahmood.

Offenders coming out of prison and supervised by the Probation Service will also face similar restrictions and an expanded mandatory drug testing regime. The MoJ said it will change the law shortly so such bans can be handed down as a form of punishment for any offence.

"New technology, including artificial intelligence, will lighten the administrative burden and free up time," it said. —*PTI*

Over 586,000 people in central Vietnam will be evacuated **PHOTO: X**

Vietnam plans for mass evacuation ahead of typhoon

HANOI/ BEIJING, 24 AUG

Vietnam plans to evacuate more than half a million people, while the southern Chinese city of Sanya closed businesses and public transport on Sunday as the countries braced for an intensifying Typhoon Kajiki.

Authorities in Vietnam plan to evacuate more than 586,000 people from the central provinces of Thanh Hoa, Quang Tri, Hue and Danang, where the typhoon is forecast to make hit on Monday.

The storm could make landfall along the southern coast of China's Hainan province from Sunday, or skirt the southern coastline before heading toward Vietnam, China's National Meteorological Centre said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Tyre industry likely to see 7-8% growth this fiscal

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Indian tyre industry is expected to grow 7-8 per cent in the current financial year, driven mainly by replacement demand, according to analysts. JK Tyre & Industries MD Anshuman Singhania said the sector remains export focused, with outbound shipments exceeding Rs 25,000 crore in FY25. Despite muted demand from original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), growth is supported by capacity expansion, efficiency gains, and stronger R&D investments. The festive season, recent repo rate cuts, and favourable monsoons are expected to improve consumer sentiment, he added. According to ICRA and Crisil Ratings, exports may face geopolitical headwinds, but replacement demand, will remain the key growth driver. *—PTI*

Gold may consolidate amid fed rate cut

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Analysts suggest gold prices are set to consolidate in the near term, maintaining a positive bias due to rising expectations for a US Federal Reserve interest rate cut at its forthcoming September policy meeting. "Gold prices may continue to see some consolidation, but the bias is expected to remain positive," noted Pranav Mer, Vice President at JM Financial Services, following comments from Fed Chair Jerome Powell. The recent price surge saw gold reclaim the psychological Rs 1 lakh mark on the Multi Commodity Exchange, rising Rs 956 to Rs 1,00,391 per 10g. Market watchers will closely monitor US macroeconomic data and geopolitical developments, particularly concerning Russia-Ukraine talks and new tariffs on Russian oil imports. *—PTI*

IVPA urges govt to lift GST refund restrictions

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The Indian Vegetable Oil Producers' Association (IVPA) has called on the government to abolish the tax credit refund restrictions imposed since July 2022, citing detrimental effects on working capital and investment in the vegetable oil sector. IVPA highlighted that GST Council's limitations on refunds for accumulated Input Tax Credit under inverted duty structure are causing cash flow issues. Currently, edible oils are taxed at 5 per cent GST while essential input materials face rates of 12-18 per cent. IVPA urged government to align edible oils with other essential commodities, emphasising the necessity of stable tax policies for future investment & food security. *—PTI*

BPCL outperforms rivals in Q1 with top sales

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

State-owned fuel retailers in India reported remarkable profits for the June quarter, significantly boosted by a retail price freeze on petrol and diesel, which enhanced their margins and countered previous inventory losses. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) collectively achieved a profit of Rs 16,184 crore for April-June, a rise of over two-and-a-half times year-on-year. BPCL led with a profit of Rs 6,124 crore, exceeding IOC's Rs 5,689 crore, while HPCL posted Rs 4,371 crore. BPCL excelled with refining margins of $4.88 per barrel, surpassing IOC's $2.15 and HPCL's $3.08, alongside a refinery run rate of 118 per cent. The increased earnings were bolstered by margins of Rs 10.3 per litre on petrol and Rs 8.2 per litre on diesel. *—PTI*

Dream11 parent firm's new app to foray into financial services

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

- The app has been published by a Dream Sports entity, Dreamsuite. The website of DreamSuite shows that the app will be launched soon offering "seamless financial services"

Fantasy gaming platform Dream11's parent firm Dream Sports is testing a new app, Dream Money, to foray into the financial services sector, sources aware of the development said on Sunday.

Dream Sports has been a major real-money gaming player in India, but it has to close its money-based games after government banned online money games.

"Dream Money has been under pilot for the last few months. The platform has not been launched yet," a source aware of the development said.

As per information available on Google Play Store, the app will offer gold purchase service on a daily basis, starting from Rs 10 per day and fixed deposits starting from Rs 1,000.

The app has been published by a Dream Sports entity, Dreamsuite. The website of DreamSuite shows that the app will be launched soon offering "seamless financial services".

While Dream Sports has closed its online money-based games, it continues to operate sports experience and travel platform Dream Set Go, sports event ticketing and merchandise platform FanCode, game development unit Dream Game Studios and non-profit organisation Dream Sports Foundation. *—PTI*

Bank of India tags RCom, Anil Ambani as fraud

It said RCom had turned NPA with outstanding of Rs 724.78 cr

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

After the State Bank of India, Bank of India has classified the loan account of insolvent Reliance Communications as fraudulent and named its former director, tycoon Anil Ambani, citing alleged fund diversion in 2016, according to a regulatory filing.

State-owned Bank of India granted a Rs 700 crore loan in August 2016 to Reliance Communications for its ongoing capital and operational expenditure and repayment of existing liabilities. Half of the sanctioned amount disbursed in October 2016 was invested in a fixed deposit, which was not permitted as per the sanction letter, according to bank's letter that RCom disclosed in a stock exchange filing.

RCom said that it has on 22 August received a letter from Bank of India dated 8 August stating the bank's decision "to classify the loan accounts of the company, Anil Dhirajlal Ambani (promoter and erstwhile director of the company), and Manjari Ashok Kacker (erstwhile director of the company), as Fraud".

Previously, State Bank of India (SBI) had done the same in June this year, alleging misappropriation of bank funds by entering into transactions that violated the terms of the loans.

Following a complaint by SBI, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday searched premises linked to Reliance Communications and Ambani's residence.

RCom's former director Anil Ambani *PHOTO: PTI*

CBI said it has registered a complaint after the State Bank of India claimed a loss of Rs 2,929.05 crore, resulting from the alleged misappropriation by Reliance Communications and Ambani, the younger sibling of Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani.

Anil Ambani's spokesperson, in a statement, "strongly denied all allegations and charges" and said he "will duly defend himself".

Bank of India, in the letter disclosed in the Reliance Communications filing, said RCom had turned NPA on June 30, 2017, with an outstanding of Rs 724.78 crore.

"The Bank has been following up with the borrowers and guarantors for repayment of dues; however, they have failed and neglected to make repayment of the dues."

Reliance Communications had in April disclosed that its total debt stood at Rs 40,400 crore in March.

Following unpaid loans, the company was admitted for insolvency and bankruptcy proceedings.

The firm, Rcom is being managed under the supervision of a Committee of Creditors, led by the SBI and overseen by a Resolution Professional. *—PTI*

CBI action has no impact on Reliance Power, Infra: Filings

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Reliance Power and Reliance Infrastructure have assured stakeholders that recent Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) actions against RCom have had no effect on their business operations, financial performance, or governance. In separate filings, the companies emphasised their independence as listed entities, stating, "we are separate and independent listed entities with no business or financial linkage to Reliance Communications."

They also noted that Anil D Ambani has not been on the Board of Reliance Power for over 3.5 years, reinforcing that any CBI-related proceedings concerning RCom do not influence their management or operations. RCom is currently overseen by a committee of creditors, led by SBI, amid ongoing proceedings with the National Company Law Tribunal and Supreme Court.

In their statement, Reliance Power and Infrastructure reiterated their commitment, stating, "we will continue to focus on business plans and remain committed to creating value for all stakeholders." *—PTI*

MAY TRIGGER OPTIMISM

US Fed rate, tariffs, macro data to guide markets

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Indication of a potential US Federal Reserve rate cut may trigger optimism in the domestic equity market, with investors' attention shifting to the looming deadline for additional US tariffs on Indian goods in a holiday-shortened week ahead, analysts said.

Moreover, trading activity of foreign investors, global trends and macroeconomic data announcements will also dictate trends during the week.

Equity markets would remain closed on Wednesday for Ganesh Chaturthi.

"Positive global cues are likely to provide some support, as US markets rallied sharply and the dollar index weakened after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell hinted at potential rate cuts in his Jackson Hole Symposium speech.

US markets ended sharply higher on Friday, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average surging 1.89 per cent, the Nasdaq Composite climbing 1.88 per cent and the S&P 500 1.52 per cent.

"The Fed chief Jerome Powell's Jackson Hole speech indicates a rate cut in September," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The US doubled tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent, including 25 per cent additional duties for India's purchase of Russian crude oil.

- US doubled tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent, including 25 per cent additional duties for India's purchase of Russian crude oil. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 709.19 points or 0.87 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 238.8 points or 0.96 per cent

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 709.19 points or 0.87 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 238.8 points or 0.96 per cent.

"This week, investors will monitor domestic data releases closely, including the IIP and GDP prints, which will serve as critical indicators of economic momentum," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. *—PTI*

Starlink can't copy Indian data abroad: Govt

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The Indian government has granted a permit to Starlink Satellite Communications Private Limited after the company agreed to adhere to domestic laws, including vital security conditions.

Minister of State for Communications, Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, announced that these conditions prevent Starlink from copying or decrypting data abroad and prohibit the mirroring of Indian user traffic on any overseas systems.

"Security conditions mandate satellite communication providers to establish earth station gateways in India through which communications from satellite to users are routed," the minister explained. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) issued a Unified License (UL) to Starlink following the firm's acceptance of the stipulated terms that apply to all satellite communication providers.

"The security conditions, inter alia, include the establishment of earth station gatewayin India for providing satellite-based communication services, with no user traffic originating from or destined for India to be routed through any gateway located outside India, no copying and decryption of the Indian data outside the country, and the Indian user traffic is not to be mirrored to any system/server located abroad," he added.

Furthermore, telecom department has sought recommendations from Telecom Regulatory Authority of India regarding the terms and conditions of spectrum assignment, including spectrum pricing, satellite-based communication services. *—PTI*

HC: Can't monopolise common words like 'yatra'

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The Delhi High Court has ruled that generic and commonly descriptive words cannot be monopolised as trademarks, stating that "words used in everyday language cannot be exclusively owned." Justice Tejas Karia made the observation while dismissing an application filed by Yatra Online Limited, which sought to restrain Mach Conferences and Events Limited from launching travel services under the names "BookMyYatra" and "BookMyYatra.com."

The court held that the term "Yatra", meaning "travel" in Hindi, is generic and descriptive when used for travel-related services and therefore cannot be claimed exclusively by any company. Yatra Online argued that it had built significant brand goodwill since 2006, catering to over 15M customers and recording a Rs 5,600 crore turnover in the 2023–24 financial year. It alleged that the rival's mark was deceptively similar and adopted in bad faith to ride on its reputation.

Mach Conferences countered that "Yatra" is a commonly used descriptive term adopted by numerous travel operators across India and highlighted that Yatra Online's trademark registrations included explicit disclaimers denying exclusivity over the word. The court agreed, noting that having accepted these disclaimers at the time of registration, Yatra Online could not later seek to expand its rights or monopolise the term. *—PTI*

28 realty firms report sales worth Rs 53K cr

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

In the April-June quarter, India's 28 listed real estate companies reported impressive property sales amounting to nearly Rs 53,000 crore, led by Prestige Estates with the highest sales bookings. According to regulatory filings, total sales bookings for these firms reached Rs 52,842 crore for Q1 of FY26.

Prestige Estates Projects Ltd, based in Bengaluru, topped the list with pre-sales of Rs 12,126.4 crore, while DLF Ltd, the largest realty firm by market capitalisation, followed closely with Rs 11,425 crore due to strong demand from Gurugram's luxury home sector. Godrej Properties from Mumbai reported sales of Rs 7,082 crore, with Lodha Developers at Rs 4,450 crore and Signature Global in Delhi-NCR achieving Rs 2,640 crore. Notably, these top five developers contributed 71 per cent to the total sales.

Sobha Ltd and Omaxe Ltd with pre-sales of Rs 2,079 crore and Rs 2,001 crore, respectively. The bulk of sales pertained to residential properties, reflecting a strong recovery in market post-COVID. *—PTI*

Mcap of 8 top firms jumps by Rs 1.72L crore

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The combined market valuation of eight of the top ten most valued firms increased by Rs 1,72,148.89 crore last week, with Reliance Industries leading the surge, reflecting a bullish trend in domestic equities.

The BSE benchmark rose by 709.19 points or 0.87 per cent during the week.

Among the gainers in the top ten were Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), and Bajaj Finance.

In contrast, HDFC Bank and State Bank of India saw declines in their valuations.

Reliance Industries added Rs 48,107.94 crore to reach a market valuation of Rs 19,07,131.37 crore.

Hindustan Unilever's valuation surged by Rs 34,280.54 crore to Rs 6,17,672.30 crore, while Bharti Airtel saw an increase of Rs 33,899.02 crore, bringing its valuation to Rs 11,02,159.94 crore.

The market valuation of HDFC Bank, however, fell by Rs 20,040.7 crore to Rs 15,08,346.39 crore, and State Bank of India decreased by Rs 9,784.46 crore to Rs 7,53,310.70 crore.

Reliance Industries remains the most valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, and others. *—PTI*

BIOFUEL TURNS INTO WORRY

E20 petrol affects fuel efficiency by 5%: Experts

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The usage of 20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol in vehicles could lead to a 2-5 per cent drop in fuel efficiency, depending on the type of cars, according to automotive industry experts.

In the midst of social media debate over the impact of E20 fuel on vehicles, automotive engineers working with some of the major automakers, whom PTI spoke to, said that in older vehicles, which are not E20 compliant, there could be erosion of gaskets, fuel rubber hoses and pipes in the long term, but not immediately.

"There can be a drop in mileage ranging from 2-5 per cent, depending on the type of vehicle. This is purely because of the lower calorific value of ethanol compared to petrol," said an expert requesting anonymity.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Earlier this month, the Oil Ministry clarified that "the critiques suggest that E20 causes a 'drastic' reduction in fuel efficiency are misplaced".

On 4 August, the ministry, in a post on X, said: "Ethanol, being lower in energy density than petrol, results in a marginal decrease in mileage, estimated at 1-2 per cent for four-wheelers designed for E10 and calibrated for E20, and around 3-6 per cent in others".

When contacted for comments, leading automakers Maruti Suzuki and Hyundai Motor India declined to comment.

A Tata Motors spokesperson said, "Our vehicles are E20 compliant".

The government has taken steps to blend petrol with 20 per cent ethanol extracted from sugarcane or maize as a national programme, aimed at cutting emissions and raising the income of farmers. *—PTI*

Rekha Jhunjhunwala sold Nazara before Gaming Bill

MUMBAI, 24 AUG

- Since her exit, Nazara's share price has dropped 14 per cent, eroding around Rs 1,700 crore in investor wealth

Ace investor Rekha Jhunjhunwala has sold her entire stake in Nazara Technologies Ltd, weeks before the government passed the landmark Online Gaming Bill 2025. Jhunjhunwala offloaded nearly 27.2 lakh shares in early June 2025, fetching about Rs 770 crore and securing nearly fourfold return.

Since her exit, Nazara's share price has dropped 14 per cent, eroding around Rs 1,700 crore in investor wealth.

The new law promotes e-sports and casual gaming but bans real-money games, advertising, and related transactions, posing risks for Nazara due to its indirect exposure through Poker Baazi.

Analysts warn the regulations could weigh on future growth. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

Aditi in top 30 with one round to play at Women's Open

MISSISSAUGA, 24 AUG

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok carded an even par round of 71 on the third day of the CPKC Women's Open to sit tied 29th on the leaderboard. The 27-year-old Aditi (71-69-71) now has a score of two under par at the Mississaugua Golf & Country Club. She made three birdies and as many bogeys in her third round. On the fourth hole, Aditi dropped a shot and then made a birdie on the eighth. On the back nine, she dropped a shot on the 11th only to regain it on the 12th and drop one more on the 14th hole. A late birdie on the 17th helped her finish the day with an even par score. Indian-American Gurleen Kaur struggled in the third round as she shot a round of 3-over 74. Her score now stands at three over (74-68-74).—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ganguly named head coach of SA20 team PC

CENTURION, 24 AUG

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was on Sunday named head coach of the SA20 team Pretoria Capitals ahead of the 2026 season in what will be his first stint at the helm of affairs of a side. Ganguly, also an ex-BCCI chief, will succeed former England batter Jonathan Trott, whose stepping down from the top job was announced on Saturday. "The Prince is all set to bring a royal flair to the Capitals camp! We are ecstatic to announce Sourav Ganguly as our new head coach," the Centurion-based franchise wrote on Instagram. This will be the first time Ganguly will be the head coach of a cricket team. Between 2018 and 2019, Ganguly served as the team director of the IPL side Delhi Capitals. —*PTI*

Aishwary wins gold in Asian Shooting Championship

SHYMKENT, 24 AUG

Indian shooter Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar dished out a dominant show to win the gold medal in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions competition at the Asian Shooting Championship here on Sunday.Tomar shot 462.5 to finish on top. China's Wenyu Zhao won the silver medal with 462 points, while Japan's Naoya Okada claimed bronze with a score of 445.8.Tomar dominated the event and was leading the field for a major part of the competition.The 24-year-old Olympian had an excellent outing in the kneeling position, and though he could not replicate that in the prone.—*PTI*

Rashid to captain spin-heavy squad in Asia Cup

KABUL, 24 AUG

Rashid Khan was on Sunday named captain of a spin-heavy Afghanistan squad for the Asia Cup beginning in the UAE on 9 September. Besides the captain, the other spinners in the squad include Noor Ahmad, Mujeeb Ur Rehman, AM Ghazanfar, and veteran all-rounder Mohammed Nabi.B Afghanistan had famously reached the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup last year. From the squad that featured against Zimbabwe, Hazratullah Zazai and Zubaid Akbari have been dropped. Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Mohammad Ishaq are the two wicket-keeper batters in the side. The pace attack includes Naveen-Ul-Haq, Fazalhaq Farooqi, and Farid Malik. —*PTI*

Hail 'The Che': Man of substance will be missed

He stood tall when the storm raged

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Cheteshwar Pujara never had a cover drive like Virat Kohli. Neither did he take your breath away with a falling hook shot like Rishabh Pant, nor did he play a short-arm pull with the finesse of Rohit Sharma that could send the fans into raptures.

But in the era of uber-stylish batters, Pujara was that glue that held the Indian batting together for a decade between 2013-14 till 2023 over a period of 100-plus Test matches. His contribution to Indian cricket is not measured in sixes or strike-rates, but in time, grit, and unyielding defiance against the world's best attacks.

If Virat Kohli was the structure of the beautiful edifice that was Indian Test batting, Cheteshwar Pujara was definitely the foundation.

Those who swore by the virtue of patience that Test cricket always stood for, Pujara was that slice from the bygone days when T20 wasn't even an idea.

An obsessed father, Arvind, a small-time first-class cricketer with limited means but with big dreams, and a mother, who was a silent rock, made Pujara a man with tunnel vision.

And when Pant belted Aussie bowlers on a crooked surface, Pujara's mere presence at the other end and copping those eleven body blows on day five at the Gabba en route to a 211-ball-56 was everything that he epitomised Man of Substance, Body of Steel, and Runs of context.

Cheteshwar Pujara *PHOTO: PTI*

In a team filled with flamboyance, Pujara's scars became his badge of honour.

For Pant's 'tour de force' act at Gabba, you needed a pièce de résistance from Pujara.

Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar recalled how Pujara's reassuring presence at the crease helped the team and picked his outing in the 2018 series in Australia as one of his best performances.

"Pujara, it was always reassuring to see you walk out at No.3. You brought calm, courage, and a deep love for Test cricket every time you played.

"Your solid technique, patience, and composure under pressure have been a pillar for the team. Out of many, the 2018 series win in Australia stands out; it wouldn't have been possible without your incredible resilience and match-winning runs," Tendulkar wrote on X.

"Congratulations on a wonderful career. Good luck with the next chapter. Enjoy your second innings!" he added.

India head coach Gautam Gambhir wrote on X, "He stood tall when the storm raged, he fought when hope was fading. Congratulations, Pujji." Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh lauded Pujara's commitment to the national team. "Someone who always puts his mind, body, and soul into the country! Many congratulations on an outstanding career, Puji! See you on the other side!" wrote Yuvraj. —*PTI*

Ismaila Sarr's strike was Crystal Palace's first goal in the Premier League this season *PHOTO: X/@CPFC*

Sarr, Hudson-Odoi find the net in closely-fought draw

Forest entered a cauldron of noise in south London

MANCHESTER, 24 AUG

Callum Hudson-Odoi cancelled out Ismaila Sarr's volley to rescue Nottingham Forest a point against Crystal Palace in a 1-1 draw at Selhurst Park on Sunday.

With boardroom tension in the air palpable given the context between the two sides, Forest entered a cauldron of noise in south London.

Palace fans in attendance used a period before the game to make their opinions of both UEFA and Forest owner Evangelos Marinakis known after the role the Midlands club played in their demotion to the Conference League despite their FA Cup win securing Europa League football.

The energy took a while to bleed into proceedings on the pitch, given that Crystal Palace had to negotiate a win in the Premier League for the first time since losing star man Eberechi Eze, who completed a move to Arsenal a day prior.

For Forest, focus appeared difficult to find amid ongoing tensions between boss Nuno Espirito Santo and owner Marinakis.

On Friday, Nuno admitted the relationship between the two had changed in response to rumours of his potential departure.

However, before the game, Nuno told Sky he would hold talks with Marinakis over his future at the club.

When Morgan Gibbs-White's attempt at a chop was seized upon before Daniel Munoz's cross was fired home by Sarr, those conversations will have begun with the awkward undercurrent of a defeat.

However, a tactical switch from Nuno after the break that saw Dan Ndoye and Hudson-Odoi switch paid dividends as the pair combined for the equaliser, paving the way for more palatable talks.

A draw nearly turned into a win when new signing Igor Jesus struck the upright in added time. —*PTI*

COMMONWEALTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mirabai returns to action as Indian lifters eye rich medal haul

AHMEDABAD, 24 AUG

Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Mirabai Chanu will return to competitive action on Monday after a year-long hiatus, leading the home challenge at the Commonwealth Championships, where Indian weightlifters are expected to bag a rich medal haul.

Chanu, who has battled injuries in recent years, was last seen at the Paris Games last August, where she missed the podium by a kilogram.

With the new Olympic weight categories in force for the 2028 Los Angeles Games, the 31-year-old has decided to move down from the 49kg division to 48kg, a weight class in which she won her world championship title and two Commonwealth Games medals, but hasn't competed in it since 2018.

Managing the weight will be a challenge, and Chanu herself has admitted it. But the tenacious Manipuri, who has collected almost every accolade the sport has to offer, has embraced it.

Working closely with chief national coach Vijay Sharma, she has also been fine-tuning her technique in pursuit of the elusive 90kg snatch.

However, as she works towards peaking in October's World Championships, Chanu will not be going full tilt at the Commonwealth Championships, which is one of the qualifying tournaments for next year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. —*PTI*

India thrash Bhutan 8-0 in SAFF U17 Women's Championships

THIMPHU, 24 AUG

Anuskha Kumari scored a hattrick as India thrashed hosts Bhutan 8–0 for their third consecutive win at the SAFF U-17 Women's Championships here on Sunday.

Besides Kumari's (53rd, 61st, 73rd) stellar performance, Abhista Basnett (23rd, 89th) scored a brace while Pearl Fernandes (71st), Divyani Linda (77th), and Valaina Jada Fernandes (90+2) were on target. India led 1-0 at half-time.

With this dominant result, the Young Tigresses have now scored 17 goals in three matches without conceding once, tightening their grip on top spot in the table and edging closer to the trophy. —*PTI*

Anuskha netted a hattrick to lead India's riot vs Bhutan *PHOTO: X/INDIAN FOOTBALL*

Marquez registers seventh victory

BALATON PARK, 24 AUG

Ducati's Marc Marquez delivered a masterclass at the Balaton Park Circuit on Sunday, winning the first Hungarian Grand Prix in 33 years to secure his seventh straight sprint-race double and stretch his championship lead to a commanding 175 points.

KTM's Pedro Acosta and Aprilia's Marco Bezzecchi joined Marquez on the podium as reigning champion Jorge Martin came fourth -- his best finish on the Aprilia since his return from injuries.

Gresini Racing's Alex Marquez, second in the championship behind his brother, could only manage 14th place after an early fall. —*PTI*

Marsh and Green ton up in consolation win vs SA

MACKAY, 24 AUG

Travis Head, Mitchell Marsh, and Cameron Green smashed blistering hundreds as Australia steamrollered South Africa by 276 runs in the final one-day international in Mackay on Sunday.

South Africa had already clinched the series, which it won 2-1 after Australia claimed the T20 series between the sides, and the 50-overs world champion was left playing for pride in the last match.

A 250-run opening partnership between player-of-the-match Head (142) and Marsh (100), and an incendiary hundred by Green powered Australia to a mammoth 431-2.

The host hit 18 sixes as it posted its second-highest total in ODIs, behind its 434 against the same opposition in 2006.

South Africa was all out for 155 in 24.5 overs with spinner Cooper Connolly completing figures of 5-22. —*PTI*

US Open: Sinner, Alcaraz and Swiatek eye glory

NEW YORK, 24 AUG

Women's world number one Sabalenka opens the defense of her 2024 crown on the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center's Arthur Ashe Stadium showcourt against unseeded Swiss player Rebeka Masarova in one of the highlights of the opening day of the singles.

Italy's world number one Sinner, meanwhile, begins his bid for back-to-back titles on Monday, when he takes on unseeded Czech Vit Kopriva. Both Sabalenka and Sinner are attempting to become the first players to successfully defend their titles for more than a decade.

The women's draw is just as enticing. Iga Swiatek has reminded everyone why she has spent so long at No. 1. A summer surge, capped by a Wimbledon crown, has restored her confidence, and she arrives in New York having dropped just three sets across her past 15 matches. With her heavy topspin and unrelenting consistency, she looks primed for another deep run.

No woman has repeated at the US Open since Serena Williams won the last of a hattrick of titles in 2014, following wins in 2013 and 2012. On the men's side, it has been 17 long years since a successful title defense, with Roger Federer's 2008 victory capping a remarkable run of five straight championships. —*PTI*

BWF WORLDS C'SHIPS

Lakshya Sen, PV Sindhu face stern test

PARIS, 24 AUG

Lakshya Sen will face a daunting opener against top seed Shi Yu Qi, while former champion P V Sindhu will look to shake off a poor run as Indian shuttlers gear up for a stern test at the BWF World Championships beginning here on Monday.

It has been a tough year for India's leading players, with injuries and inconsistent form hampering their build-up. Sen, ranked 21, is returning to the French capital a year after the heartbreak of finishing fourth at the Olympics. Since then, the 24-year-old from Almora, who claimed a bronze at the 2021 edition, has struggled for results, with a quarterfinal at the All England being his best show in 2024. He has often faltered in tight matches against Li Shi Feng, Kodai Naraoka, and Shi, who leads their head-to-head 3-1. The Chinese world No.1, in red-hot form with three Super 1000 titles this season, had beaten Sen in three games in Indonesia earlier this year.

Lakshya Sen and P V Sindhu *PHOTO: PTI*

In women's singles, Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist and 2019 world champion, will have to recover from the shock defeat against fellow Indian Unnati Hooda at the China Open.

The most accomplished Indian with five world championship medals, Sindhu will begin her campaign against Bulgaria's Nalbantova. Sindhu has endured a lean season, with a quarterfinal finish at the India Open her best result.

Satwik and Chirag, who won the 2022 bronze, have been consistent this year, making the semifinals at the India, Singapore, Malaysia, and China Open and the quarterfinals in Indonesia. The Asian Games champions are yet to convert their form into a title win. —*PTI*

India A Women lost to Australia A by 6 wickets

BRISBANE, 24 AUG

Australia A top-order fired in unison after off-spinner Amy Edgar completed her five-wicket haul as the hosts defeated India A by six wickets on the final day of the one-off unofficial Women's Test here Sunday.

Edgar (5/57) claimed the scalp of VJ Joshitha in the second over of the day to get her fifer as India A folded for 286 in their second innings, setting the hosts a 281-run target.

Australia A's chase was anchored by half-centuries from Anika Learoyd (72), Rachel Trenaman (64), and Maddy Drake (68). They overhauled the target in 85.3 overs.

Opener Trenaman and skipper Tahlia Wilson (46) gave the hosts a flying start, putting the Indian attack on the back foot with a brisk 117-run partnership.

Anika Learoyd *PHOTO: PTI*

Brief Scores:

India A: 299 and 286 all out in 81. overs overs (Shafali Verma 52, Raghavi Bist 86; Amy Edgar 5/57)

Australia A: 305 and 283/4 in 85.3 overs (Anika Learoyd 72, Maddy Drake 68; Saima Thakor 2/63) —*PTI*